

## What are the benefits of the Iowa Alternate Assessment system for my child?

- It raises expectations for your child's learning.
- It allows access to the general curriculum through fair and meaningful assessment.
- It helps teachers focus on specific academic skills.
- It is a tangible way to measure your child's progress.
- It decreases the distance between general education and special education curriculum, teachers and students.



## Does my child's participation in the Iowa Alternate Assessment have any negative impact on the school?

- There are no adverse consequences from participating in Iowa Alternate Assessment.

## The Iowa Department of Education

*Mission:* Champion excellence for all Iowa students through leadership and service



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\*Original Artwork by Max, age 9, and Natalie, age 7.

What you have always wanted  
to know about  
**The Iowa Alternate Assessment**  
But didn't know how to ask...



**Questions and Answers**  
for parents of children who participate  
in **The Iowa Alternate Assessment**

**Iowa Department of Education**  
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## What is an alternate assessment?

- It is part of the state's accountability system. It is used with a small number of students with disabilities, who are unable to take Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) or the Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED) with accommodations.

## What is the purpose of alternate assessment?

It measures educational performance in reading, mathematics, and science and promotes access to the general education curriculum.



## Why does my child participate in alternate assessment?

- No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requires all children to have access to the general education curriculum.
- In addition, the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires all students to participate in the statewide assessment system.
- Your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, including you, makes the decision about which assessment is the most appropriate and fairest for your child.

## Can I refuse to have my child participate in alternate assessment?

All children must be assessed under NCLB either through the ITBS, ITED or alternate assessment.

## What are the main steps in the Iowa Alternate Assessment that I need to know?

- Decision is made at an IEP meeting about whether your child will be assessed with an alternate assessment or ITBS/ITED.
- Teacher teaches the required academic curriculum using methods adapted to your child.
- Teacher gathers evidence of performance and rates your child's performance as supported by the evidence.
- Building administrator signs off on teachers work by March 31st of academic year.



## Why can't my child's IEP goals be used to measure growth?

- IEP goals do not include the full range of skills representative of the general curriculum, including academics.
- IEP goals are individualized and are not tied to the Iowa Core Content Standards and Benchmarks, so they cannot be used to measure whether your child's school is meeting its Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under NCLB.



## How can I help with my child's alternate assessment?

- Talk to your child's teacher about alternate assessment.
- Ask questions so that you understand what Iowa Alternate Assessment is and how it is administered.
- Ask your child's teacher to see the rating scales used and your child's alternate assessment results.
- Ask your child's teacher if there are activities you can do at home to supplement school work.